

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 USBERL 02147 01 OF 02 161258Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02  
SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01  
USIA-06 PRS-01 CU-04 /067 W  
-----051932 161307Z /43

R 161220Z AUG 77  
FM USMISSION USBERLIN  
TO AMEMBASSY BONN  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5104  
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 2147

FOR GERMAN FROM SEMLER

E O 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV WB BQG  
SUBJ: MAYOR STOBBE'S IDEA FOR APRUSSIAN EXHIBITION

REF: BONN 12945 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: BERLIN GOVERNING MAYOR DIETRICH STOBBE'S PROPOSAL  
FOR A PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION IN BERLIN HAS DRAWN CONSIDERABLE  
PRAISE, LOCALLY AND IN THE FRG, AS WELL AS SOME CRITICISM.  
THE SUGGESTED TIME FOR THE EXHIBITION IS AT LEAST FOUR  
YEARS AWAY, AND NO CONCRETE PLANNING HAS YET BEEN DONE.  
ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH DCM IN BONN (REFTEL) HAS EXPRESSED  
THE VIEW THAT A PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION WOULD BE "PROVOCATIVE,"  
WE BELIEVE SUCH A JUDGEMENT TO BE ILL-FOUNDED. END SUMMARY.

1. STOBBE FIRST RAISED THE IDEA OF A PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION  
IN JUNE THIS YEAR, HAVING BEEN INSPIRED BY THE RESOUNDING  
SUCCESS OF THE RECENT HOHENSTAUFEN EXHIBITION IN STUTTGART.  
IN A PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 28, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE  
REICHSTAG BUILDING MIGHT BE A SUITABLE SITE FOR  
THE DISPLAYS. THE FOCUS, IN STOBBE'S OPINION, WOULD  
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PAGE 02 USBERL 02147 01 OF 02 161258Z

BE "WHAT THE STATE OF PRUSSIA HAS MEANT FOR THE  
HISTORY OF THE GERMANS." IN A LATER CONVERSATION WITH  
SENAT LIAISON OFFICER AUGUST 12 STOBBE CONFIRMED THAT  
WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS MORE OF A CULURAL-HISTORICAL  
HAPPENING, THOUGH BY NO MEANS HAD ANY FIXED PLANS BEEN  
MADE. HE ENVISIONED TYING THE EXHIBITION TO THE 1982  
BERLIN FESTIVAL WEEKS AND FEATURING PLAYS AND CONCERTS BY

OR ABOUT PRUSSIANS. OBJECTS FROM THE PRUSSIAN ART TREASURES (PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ) ALREADY IN BERLIN'S MUSEUMS, WOULD BE INCLUDED BUT WOULD NOT BE GIVEN PRIMARY EMPHASIS; HE COULD NOT ANTICIPATE, AS YET, HOWEVER, HOW MANY SUCH OBJECTS MIGHT BE PART OF THE SHOW.

2. THE CONCEPT OF A PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION HAS DRAWN GENERAL FAVORABLE COMMENT IN BERLIN AND THE FRG: SPD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPEAKER UWE-KARSTEN HEYE WAS QUOTED IN WELT JULY 7 AS NOTING THE "GREAT ENTHUSIASM" THE IDEA OF PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION HAD STIMULATED IN THE SPD. NATIONAL CDU CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL, CSU CHAIRMAN FRANZ-JOSEF STRAUSS, BADEN-WUERTEMBERG SPD CHAIRMAN ERHARD EPPLER AND BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PRESIDENT PETER LORENZ ALL HAD KIND WORDS TO SAY ABOUT THE PROJECT. NUMEROUS NEWSPAPER COLUMNISTS HAVE WRITTEN APPROVINGLY OF THE IDEA.

3. JULY 11 DER ABEND CRITICIZED THE PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION FOR THE CURRENT VAGUE STATE OF ITS PLANNING BUT NOT THE CONCEPT ITSELF. ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE, JULY 30 SPD ORGAN BERLINER STIMME CARRIED AN ARTICLE OBJECTING TO THE USE OF THE REICHSTAG BUILDING FOR A PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION. THE BUILDING IS NEEDED, THE AUTHOR ARGUED, FOR BUNDESTAG MEETINGS AND ITS PRESENT GERMAN HISTORY EXHIBITION. (COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND THIS EXHIBITION CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 USBERL 02147 01 OF 02 161258Z

WHICH HAS RUN SEVERAL YEARS MAY WELL BE CHANGED IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS IN ANY CASE.) CITING THE VIEWS OF THE SPD BUNDESTAG MEMBER HANS-JUERGEN HESS, THE WRITER CONDEMNED THE "ENTHUSIASTIC ECHO" WHICH THE EXHIBITION FOUND IN THE "RIGHTEST" PRESS. WAS IT NOT "PRUSSIAN VIRTUES" WHICH DROVE THE SOCIALISTS UNDERGROUND AND SYMIED ALL HOPES FOR GERMAN DEMOCRATIZATION UNTIL TOO LATE?" SHE CONTENTED.

4. COMMENT: A PRUSSIAN EXHIBITION WILL NO DOUBT EVOKE CONFLCTING EMOTIONS AMONG LEFT AND RIGHT: SOME ON THE LEFT MAY EXPECT IN IT A GLORIFICATION OF "MILITARISM AND REACTION" WHILE SOME CONSERVATIVES WILL SEE IN IT A POSITIVE REAFFIRMATION OF GERMANY'S (AND PRUSSIA'S) OFT-MALIGNED HISTORICAL HERITAGE; OTHERS MAY SEE IN IT SIMPLY A NON-POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF PRUSSIAN HISTORY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR GERMANY. THE GDR HAS NOT YET BEEN HEARD ON THE SUBJECT, ALTHOUGH CONCEIVABLY IT COULD OBJECT BOTH TO ANY "MILITARISTIC" ASPECTS AS WELL AS TO THE DISPLAY OF ANY ITEMS AMONG THE PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESTIZ ART TREASURES WHOSE OWNERSHIP IS DISPUTED BETWEEN THE GDR AND THE FRG OR WEST BERLIN, EVEN

THOUGH MANY OF THESE ITEMS ARE ALREADY ON SHOW IN WEST  
BERLIN MUSEUMS. IN THE MISSION'S VIEW, DISPUTED OWNER-

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PAGE 01 USBERL 02147 02 OF 02 161300Z  
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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5105  
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USBERLIN 2147

FOR GERMAN FROM SEMLER

SHIP WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT REASON FOR ALLIES TO PROHIBIT  
THE EXHIBITION. WE HAVE NO BASIS FOR BELIEF THAT THE  
BERLIN SPD GOVERNMENT, IF IN POWER IN 1981 OR 1982 WHEN THE  
EXHIBIT IS INTENDED TO TAKE PLACE, WILL GIVE OTHER THAN  
A BALANCED VIEW OF PRUSSIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE. AS  
THE DIRECTOR OF THE PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ, DR.  
WERNER KNOPP, SAID (WELT JULY 5) "THE EXHIBITION SHOULD  
BE NO 'PRUSSIAN TEMPLE', BUT ALSO NO 'COURTROOM.'" AT  
THIS EARLY DATE, ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE ALLIES SHOULD  
BAN SUCH AN EXHIBITION, AS THE FRENCH DCM IN BONN HINTED,  
SEEMS HIGHLY PREMATURE, IF NOT SIMPLY MISPLACED. THE  
CONCEPT OF THE EXHIBITION, APPARENTLY STOBBE'S PERSONAL  
BRANCHILD, IS SIMPLY NOT ADVANCED ENOUGH TO PERMIT A  
JUDGEMENT ON ITS SCOPE AND DETAILS.

5. FINALLY, LET IT BE NOTED THAT STOBBE IS AN EAST  
PRUSSIAN AND MANY SENATORS HAVE PRUSSIAN BACKGROUNDS OF  
WHICH THEY ARE PROUD. IN EAST BERLIN, YOU WILL NOTE THAT  
GNEISENAU AND SCHARNHORST STAND TALL IN THE SQUARE  
BEHIND THE OPERA. A THOUGHTFUL EAST GERMAN SAID,  
THE GDR CHOOSES NOT TO DWELL MUCH ON PRUSSIAN HISTORY  
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PAGE 02 USBERL 02147 02 OF 02 161300Z

BUT CLEARLY CLAIMS THE GREAT REFORMERS AS PART OF ITS  
HERITAGE WHILE BISMARCK AND THE MILITARISTS BELONG TO  
THE BAD GERMANY OF WHICH THE FRG IS THE SUCCESSOR STATE.  
IN OTHER WORDS, WE DOUBT THAT THE GDR, PERHAPS 50 PCT  
PRUSSIAN ITSELF, WOULD LAUNCH AN ATTACK ON THE THEME  
OF THE EXHIBITION BUT RATHER ON THE OWNERSHIP OF THE  
ART OBJECTS AND THE SELECTION PROCESS INVOLVED. GEORGE

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